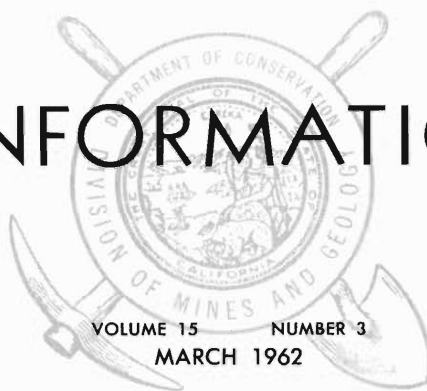


MINERAL INFORMATION SERVICE

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

DIVISION OF MINES AND GEOLOGY



Mines near Yosemite

By Oliver E. Bowen

Although no notable mineral deposits have been discovered within the limits of Yosemite Park, the mineral wealth gained from adjacent mines runs into many millions of dollars. The principal products have been gold, silver, barite, and limestone. The saga of the mines is a source of never-ending interest to nearly everyone who enters and leaves the park.

As might be expected, the search for gold brought the first prospectors into the vicinity. Discovery of the Mariposa mine in the town of Mariposa is commonly attributed to Kit Carson and two associates in the spring of 1849, although some historians doubt whether Carson had a hand in this. John C. Fremont once held title to this mine and it figured in the colorful history of his Las Mariposas land grant. The mine ultimately reached a depth of 1,550 feet and produced \$2,395,405.

Another highly lucrative mine, the Hasloe, was discovered by Thomas Palmer in 1857 astride Gentry

Gulch some 10 airline miles northwest of Briceburg. Gold-bearing quartz can still be seen where the vein crosses the gulch! Although mined to only 540 feet the mine produced more than \$3,000,000. It has been intermittently active to this day.

No account of mining in Mariposa County should omit mention of John R. Hite. He discovered the Hite mine at Hites Cove on the South Fork of the Merced River (about midway between Indian Flat on Highway 140 and Jerseydale) in 1862. With the help of Indian friends he separated, by hand mortar, enough gold to finance more elaborate mining operations. All of his early equipment had to be brought laboriously by back-pack and mule-back from Coulterville via the traverse of the main canyon of the Merced River—a herculean task. Hite became a relatively rich man from the proceeds of the mine. The total production has been around \$3,000,000.

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